



**Snohomish County
County Executive's Office**

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County Efficiency Creates Opportunity to Hire More Prosecutors

2006 Budget Proposal to include Five New Prosecuting Attorneys

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon is recommending to County Council a proposal for the 2006 Budget to fund five new Criminal Deputy Prosecutors to help keep pace with a growing felony caseload.

“Public safety is and always has been a priority of mine,” said Reardon. “I am proud to announce this proposal to support our criminal justice system.”

Funding of these new prosecuting attorney positions is made possible largely due to efficiencies made in service delivery by the planning department and by a large increase over the past year in the number of construction permits filed. These factors have led to increases in revenue to the Development Services Permit Fund 193 that are in excess of 2006 expenses.

Some of the excess funding capacity of Fund 193 will be used to pay for services back to the developers in the form of service improvements such as reducing the time to get needed construction permits. It will also pay for three existing Civil Deputy Prosecutor Attorneys currently being paid for by the General Fund. This frees up money from the general fund to in turn pay for the five criminal prosecuting attorneys.

The increased efficiency of the Planning Department Services will also lead to a 10% reduction in permit fees in 2006. This is expected to translate to lower construction costs for builders and potentially lower purchase prices for home buyers.

“This reduction will directly improve affordability.” says Reardon. “It’s a win for the citizen who benefits from better public safety and a potential reduction in new home costs.”

Specifically, the proposal funds two project Land Segregation Clerks to eliminate the backlog of requests for developer services such as, new tax parcel creation and assignment of parcel numbers on short and formal plats. The backlog is expected to take two years to eliminate, at which time the positions would be eliminated. Total cost of the two Land Segregation Technicians in 2006 is \$106,000.

The Planning Permit Fund will also be used to pay for three senior level Civil Deputy Prosecutor Attorneys currently paid for by the general fund. These Prosecutor Attorneys currently work in the Prosecutors Civil Section handling code and permit activity. This frees up general funds allowing for the hiring of five entry level Criminal Deputy Prosecutors. The cost to reimburse the three Civil Deputy Prosecutor Attorneys is roughly \$375,000 per year. The reimbursement cost of \$365,000 would be used to fund the five Criminal Deputy Prosecutors.

The proposal also calls for the Fund 193 Planning budget to be expanded for 2006 by \$520,000 to enhance and improve services to further facilitate permit processing and land use planning. .

The total reduction in revenues and increase in expenditures will deplete 2005 projected year end revenue of the 193 Planning fund by \$2.1 million, leaving the fund \$525,000 of projected undesignated fund balance at the end of 2006, even if 2006 created no additional surplus.

An Overview proposal will:

- Reduce permit costs in an rapidly escalating housing market;
- Eliminate the enormous backlog of segregation review within 2 years
- Provide a new and appropriate source of funding for senior civil prosecuting attorneys working on code and permit work, thus freeing up General Fund dollars for new criminal prosecuting attorneys;
- Improve the quality of implementation of regulations that follow the passage of the Critical Areas Ordinance.

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